

SOME FACTORS INVOLVED IN THE TRUANCY OF
CULTURALLY DEPRIVED CHILDREN

A THESIS

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DEDICATION

To my husband, Jimmy, for his patience and kindness, without whose love and support, this accomplishment would have been impossible.

To my mother and uncle, Frank, for their encouragement and faith in my determination to accomplish this goal.

Mildred L. McCollough Edwards

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INTRODUCTION

Truancy is one of the most serious expressions of the "anti-school attitude" and is not limited to absentees themselves; but also to the attitudes of the absentees' families. In order to approach a solution to the problem, the causes must be understood.

The child who comes from the economically marginal family may be absent because of a number of factors. Some of these factors could be lack of motivation from the school and the family, psychological blocks to learning caused by parental attitudes, or the child himself may have an "anti-school attitude." Lack of clothing or money to participate in school activities could keep the child out of school.

The child is not solely responsible for his truancy. There may be conditions in his family and sometimes in his neighborhood and school that have precipitated or enlarged his difficulties. The school social worker can be helpful in helping the child, family, neighborhood, and school to change the conditions which may push the child into truancy. The social worker also shares her

understanding of the child's problem with the school in such a way as to enhance the teacher's desire and skill to aid the child.

In this paper, the researcher will attempt to reveal some of the factors which contribute to truancy among culturally deprived children.

CHAPTER I

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Significance of the Study

In our nation, the primary purposes of the school are to guide each child, according to his ability, in the pursuit of knowledge and truth, in the development of useful skills, and in the ability to think clearly and independently; to prepare him in the ways of democracy; to help him develop self-respect, self-discipline, and moral strength along with mutual respect for others; to help him prepare to earn a living and to live with reasonable dignity and happiness.¹ It goes without saying that some schools may not provide such positive experiences. It is also true that some children, because of problems, limited ability or non-attendance, may not be able to utilize or benefit from what the school does have to offer. However, most schools are able to offer some positive learning experiences to the students.

The learning experience is not isolated within the

¹John C. Nebo, Administration of School of Social Work (New York: National Association of Social Workers, 1960), p. 13.

framework of the academic setting, but is carried on within the framework of the child's environment and culture. The family, neighborhood, and community surroundings are basic to the child in the learning process as are the components of his own personality. The home shares with the school the task of molding the child's life toward socially desired goals. The effectiveness of many methods of teaching is dependent upon co-operative relationships within the home, school, and community.²

When any of these three areas of society (home, school, community) becomes weak, indifferent, diseased, disorganized, or inoperative, the condition, if not checked, may spread to others. Children who come from unhappy homes or from homes with severe problems of neglect, poverty, or indifference toward education, or general discord in the family are neither ready nor able to make the fullest use of their own abilities or of the educational opportunities available to them in school.³ These children frequently will not be in regular attendance at school.

²Ibid., pp. 13-14.

³Ibid., p. 14.

Disadvantaged children are especially deficient in what might be called "school know how." By this is meant the subtle expectations concerning various procedures in the school which the average middle-class child usually learns without realizing it, from his parents and general environment. By contrast, the deprived child frequently has not learned how to relate to the teacher, how to ask and answer questions, how to study, and how to take tests. These difficulties hamper the child tremendously in the school system.⁴

The home and family background is considered to be one of the most significant influences on the child's development. If the home is broken, physically crowded, (as in most low income families), if parental attitudes and values are not favorable toward educational pursuits, this may influence the child's attendance and achievement in school.⁵

Children who are culturally and economically deprived because of family background have in common the following:

⁴Frank Riessman, The Culturally Deprived Child (New York: Harper and Row, 1962), p. 2.

⁵S. Stansfield Sargent and Robert C. Williamson, Social Psychology (New York: Ronald Press Co., 1958), pp. 111-112.

1. They have missed many out-of-school experiences which middle-class children have had and which develop concepts and attitudes favorable to school success. Many of the lower-class parents cannot supply these experiences because they are limited by their own problems.
2. What they are expected to learn in school is in conflict with their out-of-school interests, goals, and their motivation for learning school skills is limited.
3. Difficult family or social conditions are the rule for these children, yet in their books, they find a picture of the "normal" suburban family.
4. As a result of their cultural and economic deprivation and its many problems, many of these children question their own self-worth, feel inferior in the school situation, and have many feelings of guilt and shame.⁶

A great number of factors may enter into the development of an attendance problem. The child from the economically marginal family may be truant because he feels that he cannot compete with other children as far as money and clothes are concerned.⁷ He may also feel left out of school activities if a fee is involved.

There is no one cause for truancy for each child, but rather a combination of many. The roots of truancy

⁶George Simpson, People in Families (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 1960), p. 289.

⁷John R. Altmeyer, "The School Social Worker and Problems of School Attendance," Social Work, II (October, 1957).

may lie in the school, the child's home or the child himself. There are family attitudes or indifferences toward education which account for some truancy. In these families, the child receives little or no stimulation to attend school, or if the family's attitude is strongly against education, he may feel rejected by his family if he attends school and achieves.⁸

For the school social worker working in deprived areas, it is necessary to understand the socio-economic and cultural aspects of the community as they affect the attendance of the school child. The school social worker's primary responsibility is to the child with problems which interfere with his progress in school. The worker looks for factors that interfere with learning and ways to help to alleviate these factors.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to find why some children are truant and others are not truant when both groups come from similar backgrounds. By similar backgrounds is meant that both groups came from the same low income area of the city. Economic situation of the family,

⁸Mildred Sikkema, "Removing the Causes of Non-Attendance at School," Bulletin (June, 1954), pp. 3-4.

relationship of the parents to the school and parental interest in school activities are presumed to be factors in truancy of the culturally deprived children.

The social worker's understanding of the factors which contribute to truancy will be helpful not only to her, but to other school personnel in working with the truant child and his family. This knowledge will be valuable in helping the school personnel evaluate its program in terms of what will be helpful to the deprived child and to motivate him to want to come to school.

This study is designed to test the following hypotheses:

1. Economic situation of the family, relationship of the parents to the school, and parental interest in school activities as indicated by attendance and participation are factors in truancy of culturally deprived children.
2. Some children are affected more by the factors in the above hypothesis than other children with similar backgrounds.

Method of Procedure

The data used in this study were gathered from school records and interviews with parents and teachers.

All students used in this study were students enrolled for the entire school year of 1963-64 at Myers

Street School, Charlotte, North Carolina. The students selected for this study did not have any serious illnesses during that school term, since illness is a justified excuse for absences. Twenty-five non-truant cases and twenty-five truant cases were used for this study.

The truants were the experimental group and the non-truants were the control group.

Certain terms were defined for the purpose of this study. They are as follows:

Truancy was used in this study to cover two types of unexcused absences; they are (1) where the child "willfully absents himself from school," which is the legal definition of truancy, and (2) those instances where the parent keeps the child home or permits him to be absent without an excuse as defined by the School Board. Truancy was used to mean a student with thirty or more absences.⁹

Non-truants will refer to those students who were absent less than ten days during the school term.

Culturally deprived refers to those aspects of middle-class culture such as books, formal language, and education-from which this group has not benefited. It also refers to those members in the lower socio-economic group who have had limited access to education and job opportunities.¹⁰

⁹State Superintendent of Public Instruction, Child Accounting and School Attendance (Raleigh, 1954), p. 17.

¹⁰Riessman, Op. Cit., p. 3.

In discussing truancy with the principal and teachers, it was generally conceded that students in the first three grades had less control over their absences than students in the higher grades. Therefore, a study was made of the fourth, fifth, and sixth grade registers for the 1963-64 school term in order to find all the cases of truancy and good attenders.

In looking through the attendance records, it was found that there were ten students in the fourth grade who were absent more than thirty days; five in the fifth grade; and ten in the sixth grade -- making a total of twenty-five students who were truant according to the legal definition of truancy. All twenty-five cases were used in the study.

In checking for non-truants (less than ten absences), there were forty-eight students in the fourth grade, thirty-eight in the fifth grade, and thirty-four in the sixth grade.

In order to select the same number of good attenders for each grade as the poor attenders, the names were listed alphabetically for each grade. For the fourth grade, the size of the sampling interval was obtained by dividing the total population of forty-eight by ten; every fourth name was selected. For the fifth grade, the

population of thirty-eight was divided by five and every seventh name was selected. The population of thirty-four for the sixth grade was divided by ten and every third name selected -- making a total population of twenty-five good attenders which were used in this study.

Schedules* were used as guides in interviewing the parents and teachers. Included in the schedules were questions to ascertain those factors which might possibly lead to truancy. The factors that were included in the schedules are as follows: economic situation of the family as it relates to the number of persons supported by the family income; attitudes of the parents toward education which might affect the child's attendance in school; and parental interest in school activities as indicated by attendance and participation in school activities.

Scope

The study included data gathered from school records at Myers Street School and interviews with parents and teachers. The students were enrolled during the entire school year of 1963-64. They were fourth, fifth, and sixth grade students without any serious illnesses during the year.

*See Appendixes A and B.

All the truant cases were used, and cases for the non-truants were randomly selected for this study from a universe of one hundred and twenty (120) cases.

CHAPTER II

HISTORY OF MYERS STREET SCHOOL AND SCHOOL SOCIAL WORK SERVICES IN CHARLOTTE, NORTH CAROLINA

The setting for this study is Myers Street School. Myers Street School is located in Charlotte, North Carolina. The state of North Carolina is divided into three sections; Coastal Plains, Peidmont, and Mountainous Region. Charlotte is situated in the Southern Peidmont section of North Carolina; and is the county seat of Mecklenburg County.

The city of Charlotte serves as a shopping, entertainment, medical, and transportation center for the Southeast. The community has many recreational and sport facilities, as well as cultural programs.

Myers Street School is one of the one hundred and nine (109) schools in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg School System.¹ In 1960 the city and county school system were consolidated to give better services and save on administrative expenses.

¹Handbook For Teachers in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg School System (Charlotte, North Carolina, 1964-65), p. 29.

Myers Street School is located in the Brooklyn section of Charlotte. At one time this section was the elite section of the city for Negroes, but, as times changed and other sections of the city became available to Negroes, many moved away. This section has gone through a transition period from home owners to tenants and is now one of the worst slum areas in Charlotte. Due to deterioration, this section was selected for an Urban Renewal Project and again is in a transitional stage with houses being torn down and families moving away.

Myers Street School was built in 1877 in its present location. This was the only school in Mecklenburg County for Negro students until 1923 at which time Second Ward High School was built.²

The land for Myers Street School was donated by Mr. M. G. Myers, a white City Councilman, for whom the school is named. The original building was a one-story, wooden structure with six classrooms. A principal and four teachers were employed to teach grades one through eight. Students came from all over the city and county to attend this school. As the student population increased,

²Interview with Mr. B. D. Roberts, Principal of Myers Street School, Charlotte, North Carolina. April 21, 1965.

wings were added to the original structure. In order to accommodate the student population, the teaching staff was increased.³

As the standard of education advanced, Second Ward High School was built for grades seven through eleven. Myers Street School then had only grades one through six, which is the present system. In 1932, Myers Street School was completely renovated and enlarged to the present brick structure.⁴

This school was one of the first Negro schools in Charlotte to receive the services of the School Social Work Department. Through the School Social Work Service, the students at Myers Street School are able to receive free lunches, clothing, and other services offered by the Department when needed.

Money for the free lunch program is provided by the Board of Education to the schools. Free lunches are given to children who are in need and otherwise would not have lunch during the day while attending school. This program was not set up to take over the parents' responsibilities

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid.

to their children, but is an effort to help parents keep their children in school. This program is a benefit to children who will not attend school without lunch. Since Myers Street School is in a low income section of Charlotte, there are more students receiving free lunches than in the other schools in the system.

Clothing is another one of the many services offered by the School Social Work Service. Different civic organizations donate money for clothing. The Central PTA group also collects good used clothing which are cleaned and repaired for needy children. These clothes are placed in the central clothing room for distribution. Referrals for free lunches and clothing are made by principals and teachers for the students to the school social worker assigned to the school.

The students also receive services from all the Special Education Programs in the Charlotte-Mecklenburg School System such as Educational Evaluation Services, Psychological Services, Physical Education, Special Abilities and Talents Program, Music, Performing Arts, and Special Reading Services.

The Department of Educational Evaluation Services was organized to function as an integral part of the total school program, to become an educational evaluation and

research center for the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, and to provide all school personnel with a continuous flow of information concerning the aptitudes and progress of students. The department has two major functions: the evaluation of the school programs and the various curriculums through educational research, and the organization and administration of the system-wide testing program.⁵

The promotion of sound psychological-educational development of each individual within the schools and the alleviation of individual difficulties and problems requires the cooperative efforts of every professional school employee. The Department of Psychological Services was conceived and organized as a centralized resource for consultative and clinical services regarding psycho-educational development, difficulties, and problems.

The difficulties experienced by individuals often create psychological problems which reduce the person's educational effectiveness and psychological fitness or mental health. These problems are often seen as relating

⁵Special Services Handbook - Charlotte-Mecklenburg School System (Charlotte, North Carolina, 1963-64), p. 3.

to personality, school-learning, speech, or life-adjustment. The prevention and alleviation of these psycho-educational problems demand the efforts of Psychological Services at three levels of involvement: general consultation, case consultation and/or clinical evaluation, and clinical referral.⁶

The other Special Education Services are incorporated in the daily school program.

During the academic year 1964-65, Myers Street School was staffed with a principal, twenty-eight regular teachers, four special teachers, a nurse, social worker, one secretary, and eight menial employees. The student population at the end of the first month of school was eight hundred and fifty-seven. However, the enrollment has decreased due to families moving out of the community because of the Urban Renewal Project. By the beginning of the next school term, the principal, Mr. Roberts expects that about one third of the students will not return to Myers Street School. He also predicts that several teachers will be transferred to other schools in the school system. However, he does predict that this school will continue to operate for many years to come.

⁶Ibid., p. 7.

CHAPTER III

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF TRUANTS AND NON-TRUANTS

Since truancy is a big problem in many of our schools, some of the factors that influence truancy need to be understood. This study sought to prove that certain factors contribute to truancy by comparing a group of truants with a group of non-truants with similar backgrounds to see if certain factors were present in the truants and not present in the non-truant group.

Schedules were used as guides for interviewing parents and teachers (see Appendixes A and B). The findings of the interviews were placed on tables to make a comparison of the two groups to see the factors which contribute to truancy.

The teachers stated that absences in twenty-four of the truant cases were truant. In the other case, the child was absent to give care to younger siblings (see Table 1, page 20). The teachers stated that they could see children playing on the school grounds when they (children) were supposedly too ill to attend school. The

reasons given by the parents were different than the reasons stated by the teachers for the absences (see Table 1 below).

TABLE 1
DAYS ABSENT AND CAUSES OF ABSENCE FOR TRUANTS
AS STATED BY PARENTS AND TEACHERS

Case	No. of Days Absent	Causes	
		Parents	Teachers
1	57	illness	truancy
2	56	work & illness	truancy
3	111	illness	truancy
4	69	other*	truancy
5	71	work	truancy
6	62	illness	truancy
7	70	illness	truancy
8	47	illness	truancy
9	30	work	truancy
10	50	work	truancy
11	74	illness	truancy
12	43	illness	truancy
13	111	work	truancy
14	47	work	truancy
15	73	work & other*	truancy
16	88	truancy	truancy
17	98	work	truancy
18	87	work & illness	truancy
19	38	illness	truancy
20	88	other*	child care
21	71	work	truancy
22	48	work	truancy
23	47	work	truancy
24	54	other*	truancy
25	34	work	truancy

*Other - refers to inadequate clothing to wear to school or giving care to younger siblings.

Ten of the parents stated that the children were working when they were absent; eight stated the children were ill; three said their children did not have clothing to wear to school, but they (parents) did not request clothing for the children; two parents gave a combination reason stating that the children were ill and also working; and one parent stated the child did not have sufficient clothing to wear to school and was also working. Only one parent stated that the child was truant; this parent knew the legal definition of truancy and stated that she could not control the child. This is the only parent whose reason for the absences corresponds with the reason offered by the teacher.

The causes for the absences for the non-truant as stated by the parents were the same as stated by the teacher; illness (see Table 2, page 22).

The parents of the non-truants always sought medical attention when their children were unable to attend school. The parents of the truants who gave illness as an excuse for the absences readily admitted that they (the parents) did not consult a doctor for the children, nor was any prescribed medication given to the children.

TABLE 2

DAYS ABSENT AND CAUSES OF ABSENCE FOR NON-TRUANTS
AS STATED BY PARENTS AND TEACHERS

Case	No. of Days Absent	Causes	
		Parents	Teachers
1	3	illness	illness
2	3	illness	illness
3	0	-	-
4	1	illness	illness
5	0	-	-
6	3	illness	illness
7	0	-	-
8	3	illness	illness
9	7	illness	illness
10	2	illness	illness
11	1	illness	illness
12	0	-	-
13	0	-	-
14	0	-	-
15	6	illness	illness
16	5	illness	illness
17	3	illness	illness
18	0	-	-
19	4	illness	illness
20	7	illness	illness
21	5	illness	illness
22	0	-	-
23	0	-	-
24	5	illness	illness
25	3	illness	illness

The families of the truants ranged in size from three to sixteen persons (see Table 3, page 23).

There were only six fathers in this group living with their families as shown in Table 3. This would indicate little stability in the family.

TABLE 3

PARENTS IN THE HOME AND SIZE OF THE
TRUANTS' FAMILIES

Case	Parents		Number of Children	Number of Other Relatives
	Father	Mother		
1		x	7	
2		x	5	
3		x	6	
4		x	6	
5		x	6	
6		x	6	
7		x	3	
8		x	5	
9		x	7	1
10		x	8	
11		x	7	
12		x	5	
13		x	4	
14		x	14	1
15	x	x	5	
16	x	x	4	
17	x	x	6	
18		x	7	1
19		x	4	
20	x	x	10	1
21	x	x	4	
22		x	7	
23		x	4	
24		x	2	
25	x	x	4	

The data in Table 4, page 24 show that the size of the non-truants' families ranged in size from three to eight persons. In this group only seven fathers were absent from the home as compared with the truant group where only six fathers were in the home (see Table 3, page 23).

TABLE 4

PARENTS IN THE HOME AND SIZE OF THE
NON-TRUANTS' FAMILIES

Case	Parents		Number of	Number of Other
	Father	Mother	Children	Relatives
1	x	x	2	
2	x	x	4	
3		x	2	
4	x	x	2	
5		x	5	
6	x	x	3	
7		x	2	
8	x	x	2	
9		x	6	
10		x	5	
11	x	x	5	1
12	x	x	6	
13	x	x	3	
14	x	x	1	
15	x	x	4	
16	x	x	4	
17		x	5	
18	x	x	6	
19		x	2	
20	x	x	4	1
21	x	x	3	
22	x	x	1	
23	x	x	3	
24	x	x	6	
25	x	x	2	

The income in the truants' families ranged from a high of \$74.00 per week to a low of \$17.00 weekly. Fourteen of the families received their income from employment, and of this fourteen, it was the mother's income alone in eight families which supported the family. (See

Table 5 below.) Public Assistance was received by six families and four families received Social Security Benefits. In the truant group, one mother received support from the father of her children; the father was not living with the family.

TABLE 5
WEEKLY INCOME AND SOURCE OF INCOME FOR
FAMILIES OF TRUANTS

Case	Income	Source of Income	Number of Persons Supported by Income	Income per Person
1	\$ 28.00	Employment	8	\$ 3.50
2	32.00	Employment	6	5.33
3	25.00	Employment	7	3.57
4	32.50	Public Assistance	7	4.63
5	32.00	Public Assistance	7	4.58
6	30.00	Employment	7	4.28
7	33.50	Social Security	4	8.37
8	45.50	Public Assistance	6	7.58
9	20.00	Support from Father	9	2.22
10	17.50	Social Security	9	1.91
11	28.00	Employment	8	3.50
12	28.00	Employment	6	4.66
13	62.85	Social Security	5	12.57
14	33.00	Employment	16	1.06
15	52.00	Employment	7	7.42
16	61.00	Employment	6	10.16
17	52.00	Employment	8	6.50
18	52.50	Public Assistance	9	5.83
19	32.00	Public Assistance	5	6.40
20	74.00	Employment	13	5.69
21	52.00	Employment	6	8.66
22	57.00	Employment	8	7.12
23	35.00	Public Assistance	5	7.10
24	32.75	Social Security	3	10.91
25	51.00	Employment	6	8.50

The income in the non-truants' families ranged from a high of \$132.00 weekly to a low of \$30.00 weekly. (See Table 6, p.27.) More families in the non-truant group received their income from employment (19) than in the truant group. Four of the families in the non-truant group received income from Social Security Benefits. Two families received income from Public Assistance as compared with six families in the truant group.

When the total income was related to the number of persons supported by it, the income per person in the non-truant group (see Table 6, page 27) was higher than the income per person in the truant group (see Table 5, page 25). In the non-truant group, there were only nine families with less than \$10.00 weekly per person, whereas in the truant group, twenty-two families had less than \$10.00 weekly per person. This would seem to indicate that in families with high incomes the occurrence of absences was less frequent than in families with low incomes.

TABLE 6

WEEKLY INCOME AND SOURCE OF INCOME FOR
FAMILIES OF NON-TRUANTS

Case	Income	Source of Income	Number of Persons Supported by Income	Income per Person
1	\$ 87.00	Employment	4	\$ 21.74
2	91.00	Employment	6	15.16
3	40.00	Employment	3	13.33
4	84.00	Employment	4	21.00
5	37.00	Public Assistance	6	6.16
6	55.00	Employment	5	11.00
7	30.00	Employment	3	10.00
8	35.00	Social Security	4	8.77
9	50.75	Public Assistance	7	7.25
10	50.75	Social Security	6	8.46
11	62.50	Employment	8	7.81
12	65.00	Employment	8	8.12
13	45.00	Employment	5	9.00
14	61.00	Employment	3	20.33
15	90.00	Employment	6	15.00
16	74.00	Employment	6	12.46
17	35.00	Social Security	6	5.91
18	132.00	Employment	8	16.50
19	33.75	Social Security	3	11.28
20	127.00	Employment	7	18.14
21	91.00	Employment	5	18.20
22	61.00	Employment	3	20.33
23	74.00	Employment	5	14.80
24	64.00	Employment	8	8.00
25	72.00	Employment	4	18.00

It was found that where the parents' attitudes toward education were negative, the more the children were absent. The data in Table 7, page 28 reveal that the parents of the truants showed little interest in school activities.

TABLE 7

ATTITUDES OF PARENTS OF TRUANTS TOWARD
ATTENDING AND PARTICIPATING IN
SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

Responses	Encourage Children to participate in school activities	Parental participi- pation in PTA Activi- ties	Con- ference with Teachers
Regularly	5	2	4
Seldom	4	9	10
Never	16	14	11
Total	25	25	25

Fourteen parents in the truant group never participated in Parent-Teachers Association activities, nine seldom participated and two were in regular attendance. Of this group, only four of the parents had regular conferences with their children's teachers, ten seldom had conferences, and eleven never had conference with the teachers to discuss the progress their children were making in school. As shown in Table 7, above, the majority of the parents in this group did not encourage their children to participate in school activities. Of this group, only five parents stated that they always encouraged their children to participate in school.

activities, four parents stated that they seldom encouraged their children to participate in school activities, and sixteen of the parents stated that they never encouraged their children to participate in school activities. According to the teachers, the parents in the truant group did not act as grade mothers, nor did they act as chaperones for class trips. Although, there were some school activities which did not require a fee, some of the parents of truants did not encourage their children to participate in these activities. According to statements made by these parents, they did not feel it was necessary for them to attend Parent-Teachers Association meetings or other school activities. Parents of the truants felt such participation was a waste of their time.

The parents of the non-truants had positive attitudes toward school activities. They felt attendance was not only a must for their children, but also that the children should take advantage of all activities offered by the school to broaden their education.

Parents of the non-truants indicated a definite interest in school activities (see Table 8, page 30).

TABLE 8

ATTITUDES OF PARENTS OF NON-TRUANTS TOWARD
ATTENDING AND PARTICIPATING
IN SCHOOL ACTIVITIES

Responses	Encourage Children to Participate in School Activities	Parental Participation in PTA Activities	Con- ference with Teacher
Regularly	21	16	21
Seldom	4	9	4
Never			
Total	25	25	25

Twenty-one parents of the non-truants encouraged their children to participate in all school activities as compared with the five parents in the truant group (see Table 7). Also, twenty-one parents in the non-truant group had regular conferences with their children's teachers to discuss the progress their children were making in school (see Table 8), as compared with only four parents in the truant group who had regular conferences with the teachers. (See Table 7.). Sixteen of the parents in the non-truant group were in regular attendance at Parent-Teacher Association meetings (see Table 8), as compared with four parents in the truant group who were in regular attendance at Parent-Teacher Association meetings (see Table 7). The parents in the non-truant group showed

their interest in school activities by becoming grade mothers, chaperones for class trips and planning parties for different occasions for the children. Most of the parents of the non-truants were on some type of committee for the improvement of the school program. The children in the non-truant group attended school more frequently than the children in the truant group where the parents had negative attitudes toward the school program.

CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

If school social workers are to fulfill their responsibility for helping children make a better adjustment in school, they must know more about parental attitudes toward education, the school and school attendance, and factors that influence attitudes and school attendance. With this in mind, this study hypothesized that the economic situation of the family, relationship of the parents to the school, and parental interest in school activities as indicated by attendance and participation are factors in truancy of culturally deprived children.

This study made use of established techniques and ways of obtaining and analyzing data. Schedules were used as guides for interviewing teachers and parents. Tables were used to analyze the data obtained from parents and teachers.

The sample consisted of fifty students enrolled at Myers Street School for the entire academic year 1963-64. All the truant cases were used and the non-truant group was randomly selected.

The findings supported the hypothesis that the economic situation of the family, relationship of the parents to the school, and parental interest in school activities as indicated by attendance and participation were factors in truancy of culturally deprived children. Where the parents had negative attitudes toward school activities and participation in school activities, their children were absent more. The children were better attenders where their parents had positive attitudes toward school activities and participation in these activities.

The findings also supported the hypothesis that school attendance is related to the economic situation of the family. It was found that the less income available to the family, the more the children were absent from school.

Negative attitudes of the parents of truants toward school were discerned when they allowed their children to remain out of school because of alleged illness; and at the same time, the children could be seen playing on the school playground. The parents of the non-truants always sought medical attention when their children were too ill to attend school.

The data in this study gave rise to other implications which were not included in the hypothesis. The findings tended to show that where more fathers were in

the home, school attendance was better. This could imply that with the father in the home, there is more stability in the family than when the father is not in the home.

This study was limited by the place of the sample. The study was conducted at one Negro Elementary School, located in one of the worst slum areas in the city. Only Negroes attended this school. Therefore, the sample was not representative of the city as a whole.

APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

SCHEDULE FOR TEACHERS

Interviewing Schedule for Teachers:

Name of child _____

Grade _____

I. School record :

a. Days absent _____

b. Cause of Absences _____

II. Interest of Parents:

a. Participation in school program and activities_

b. Interest in child's progress in school _____

c. Encourage children to participate in school
activities _____

d. Understand and support the school's program ____

APPENDIX B

SCHEDULE FOR PARENTS

Interviewing Schedule for Parents:

Name of Child _____

I. Family Makeup:

- a. Both parents in the home _____
Mother _____; Father _____
- b. Number of children: _____
- c. Number of other relatives _____

II. Economic Situation:

- a. Family income _____ weekly.
- b. Source of Income _____
- c. Number of persons supported by income _____

III. Parental attitudes toward school attendance:

- a. Attitudes toward school attendance
Positive _____ ; Negative _____
- b. Encourage children to participate in school activities:
Always _____; Seldom _____; Never _____

IV. Parental relationship to the school:

a. Interest in school activities

b. Participation in the Parents-Teachers Association

Regular attendance ____; Seldom ____; Never ____

c. Conference with teacher

Regularly ____; Seldom ____; Never ____

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